

ATTITUDES TOWARD POVERTY AND AFFLUENCE

REPRODUCIBLE WORKSHEET 3-2

Read pages 82 to 89 of the textbook, then answer the following questions to clarify your own attitudes and to determine which theory you lean toward the most.

1. Is income inequality a natural characteristic of societies that merely needs to be understood rather than eliminated, or is it a severe social problem that must be addressed by our politicians? Explain your answer with an example.
2. Does society have an obligation to help the poor by providing them with support programs such as subsidized daycare? To what extent is our society doing this already? Provide examples to illustrate your point.
3. Does providing programs to poor families reduce their desire to improve their conditions for themselves? Provide an example to explain your point of view.
4. What are some possible benefits and problems of a society giving money directly to parents living in poverty?
5. How would a structural-functionalist and a neo-Marxist each explain the fact that single-father families have higher incomes than single-mother families?
6. What kinds of changes should our society make to reduce income inequalities? In your answer, consider the groups in need listed on page 86 (the mentally ill, the physically incapacitated, etc.).
7. Referring to the discussion on welfare payments on pages 86 to 87, outline the pros and cons of welfare payments. Which side of the argument makes more sense to you, and why?
8. To what extent is poverty an individual responsibility, and to what extent is it a collective responsibility?
9. Are your views overall closer to those of a structural-functionalist or a neo-Marxist? Explain.